Resume Tips

- Customize your resume
- Choose an easy to read font and size
- Keep your resume short, unless you are applying for a federal position
- Spell check your resume
- Be honest on your resume
- Add a professional summary
- Focus on accomplishments and skills
- Make sure your work history is in chronological order (most recent job first) and includes start and end date (month, year)
- Include current contact information
- Make sure potential employer can contact your references

Cover Letter Tips

- Customize your cover letter for each position and focus on what you can offer
- Be creative and show your personality
- Keep it short, this is not a summary of your resume
- Avoid using "My name is _____, and I am applying for the position…", they know your name
- Avoid being witty or humorous and do not use awkward phrasing
- Stick with a business letter format and tone
- Use professional salutations such as Mr., Ms. and Mrs., so that you will be taken seriously
- Highlight your strengths
- Send your letter as a PDF attachment
- Check your grammar and avoid misspellings and typos

Interview Tips

- Research the agency/company before you interview for the position
- Prepare questions for the interviewer about the position and agency/company
- Practice and prepare for the interview, don't just "wing it"
- Sleep well the night before, be rested
- Dress appropriately (business casual or business formal)
- Arrive early for your interview
- Be aware of your body language and posture
- Listen carefully, do not interrupt the interviewer
- Wait for a job offer before talking about salary and benefits
- Send a personal thank you note to the interviewer within 24 hours of the interview

Note: Your potential employer can find your profile on social media sites, so avoid posting anything that you might not want them to see.

1. Customize your Resume

- It is not uncommon for an employer to get a hundred or more resumes for one position. Take the time to customize your resume so it can stand out from the others.
- Read the position description carefully and customize your resume based on the description.
- Identify key phrases in the position description and edit your resume so your skills and experience match the position description or job requirements.

2. Choose an easy to read font size and type

- Use a basic font that is easy to read. Picking the wrong font can make a big difference in the appearance of your resume.
- Use size 10 to 12 font.
- Use serif of sans serif fonts. Fonts like, Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, and Verdana are easy to read.
- Don't overuse capitalization, italics, bold, or underlines.
- Use consistent formatting.

3. Keep your resume short , unless you are applying for a federal position

- Your resume should be 1-2 pages long depending on your experience. If you use a CV (Curriculum Vitae) it does not have to be short.
- If you are applying for a federal position your resume should be very specific, usually 4-5 pages long.

4. Spell check your resume

- Proofread your resume to make sure that there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Ask a friend or colleague to proofread your resume.
- Employers may reject your application if they are spelling errors.

5. Be honest on your resume

- Although it seems intuitive, you will be surprised to know that some people lie on their resumes. You will likely be caught if you are not honest on your resume or position application and it can ruin your chances of getting the position.

6. Add a professional summary

- Your summary should focus on what you can offer to the employer.
- The summary should not be more than two lines.
- Your summary should be specific to the position.

7. Focus on accomplishments and skills

- Let the employer know what you have to offer.
- Do not mention what you do not know or skills that you lack.

8. Make sure your work history is in chronological order

- List your most recent position first.
- Add dates that you worked in each position (month, year).

9. Include current contact information

- It is very frustrating for employers to find that your contact information is outdated.
- List your cell phone, rather than your home number. You want to make sure the employers are able to reach you throughout the day.
- Ensure that your voicemail is professional. You don't want to give the wrong impression to the employer.
- Indicate relevant skills that are applicable to the position.
- Use relevant phrases from the position announcement or company's website.

10. Make sure the potential employer can contact your references

- If not included in the application, add references to your resume or add "references available upon request".
- Include 2 or 3 reliable references and make sure you have the person's permission before you put them on your resume.

1. **Customize your cover letter for each position and focus on what you can offer**
   - This is your chance to stand out. Your letter should describe why are you applying for the position and what you can offer the potential employer.
   - Although it takes more time, a letter targeted for each job shows that you are willing to take the time and effort to show the company that you are truly interested in the position.

2. **Be creative and show your personality**
   - Add a personal touch to your cover letter. This is the time to show the company/agency that you are a good match for the position being advertised.

3. **Keep it short, this is not a summary of your resume**
   - Do not write more than three paragraphs.
     - *First paragraph*: explain why you are interested in the position.
     - *Second paragraph*: explain how your previous or current experience and education makes you well suited for the job.
     - *Last paragraph*: thank them for their consideration and request a formal interview.
   - Keep it concise and to the point.
   - The letter should be between 200 to 250 words .

4. **Avoid using "My name is _____, and I am applying for the position..." they know your name**
   - They know your name and you will sound inexperienced if you begin the letter this way.

5. **Avoid being witty or humorous and do not use awkward phrasing**
   - Stick to a business letter format or might not be taken seriously.

6. **Stick with a business letter format and tone.**
   - Include information on the job you are applying for and describe why you are a good match for the position.

7. **Use professional salutations such as Mr., Ms. and Mrs., so that you will be taken seriously**
   - Address your letter to a specific name and title, if possible.

8. **Highlight your strengths**
   - Focus on your strengths and don't mention your weaknesses.
   - Do not offer your weaknesses to your prospective employer since they will likely ask you what they are if you are interviewed for the position.
   - Even if you don't meet all the requirements of the job, don't disclose that in your letter.
   - Explain how your past experiences and education translate into this new job.
   - Non-work experience can also be used in your resume and cover letter such as volunteer experience, clubs, certifications, proficiencies (e.g. computer software and hobbies, if relevant to the position).

9. **Send your letter as a PDF attachment.**
   - By sending the letter as a PDF, you will ensure that the letter remains in the same format, and will be displayed the way you intended it to be.

10. **Check your grammar. and avoid misspellings and typos**
    - Proofread and spellcheck your letter and ask someone else to review it.

1. **Research the agency/company before you interview for the position**
   - Prepare for the interview by researching the companies/agencies mission and goals.
   - Come to the interview with facts and details about the company.

2. **Prepare questions for the interviewer about the position and agency/company**
   - Make sure to have questions about the job or company/agency that you can ask at the end of the interview.

3. **Practice and prepare for the interview. Don't just "wing it"**
   - Practice your answers to commonly asked interview questions.
   - Practice answers that demonstrate your experience for the position for which you are applying.
   - Keep your answers concise and to the point.
   - Do not talk about your personal life, unless you are asked about it.

4. **Sleep well the night before, be rested**
   - Make sure to get enough sleep the night before the interview. You don't want to be late or look tired.
   - Do not go out partying the night before your interview.

5. **Dress appropriately (business casual or business formal)**
   - Dress in the appropriate attire for the position for which you are applying.
   - The first impression you make on the employer makes a huge difference in whether you are hired for the position.
   - Dress slightly higher than the job you are interviewing for.

6. **Arrive early for your interview**
   - Give yourself enough time to find the interview location, or fill out any required paperwork before your interview.

7. **Be aware of your body language and posture**
   - Sit properly – sit up straight and relax.
   - Do not cross your arms and be aware of how you use your hands.
   - Do not play with your hair or jewelry and do not chew gum.

8. **Listen careful and do not interrupt the interviewer**
   - Pay attention to the questions being asked.
   - If necessary, take the time needed to prepare good answers to the questions being asked.

9. **Wait for a job offer before talking about salary and benefits**
   - Do not ask about the salary and benefits until you receive a job offer.

10. **Send a personal thank you note to the interviewer within 24 hours of the interview**
    - Ask the interviewer for their business card or contact information.
    - Email the interviewer and thank them for their time and let them know you are very interested in the position.